

LOVAG Mark - White Paper

1 General

Certification is a procedure by which a **Third Party** (a certification body) provides written assurance that a product or service meets specified requirements. e.g. a product standard. It may concern the safety of the product, its performance, its suitability for its intended function, its electromagnetic compatibility, environmental criteria (energy consumption, end-of-life recycling, etc.), the quality of an electrical installation, etc. The specified requirements can cover a range of property, of performances, wider than the perimeter of e.g. the CE marking restricted to the essential requirements of the new approach directives

Third Party Product certification is itself governed by an international standard like Guide ISO/IEC 65 or by a regional standard like EN 45011 in EU that stipulates the requirements to be met by the certification bodies. The certification bodies must respect a certain number of important requirements that ensure impartiality, independence, equity, confidentiality, competence, and transparency.

A **Mark of Conformity** on the products denotes the conformity to specified requirements to gain the confidence of the market including the consumers. According to ISO/IEC 17030:2003 a Mark of conformity shall include surveillance, evaluating the continued conformity to the specified requirements and shall have an appropriate maximum period of time for application.

2 Certification environmental context

2.1 What is certification in the world

Third Party Certification takes different forms depending on the market segment (residential, tertiary, industrial, OEM, Marine Market) and depending on the country (e.g. China, US, Europe), such as test reports, declaration of conformity, type certificates, marks of conformity, labels, import licences accompanied or not by annual follow-ups of the product or the production.

Product certification may be:

- **Mandatory:** The objective of a country's government is to regulate imports. The zones of influence are Asia, Africa, South America, the Middle East, and Russia. It takes the form, for example, of a CCC mark with follow-up in China, tests report in Indonesia, or a declaration in Iran. The structures are very heterogeneous. The players are the customs officials, government departments, and inspection companies.
- **De facto imposed by the market:** This is the case of the US with the UL Mark for some products.
- **Contractual :** This involves the customer imposing a certification (e.g. the Marine)
- **Voluntary:** The objective is to set the market benchmarks at a very high level of safety. concerned is The structure takes the form of marks of conformity (European or National) and certificates of conformity associated with recognition agreements. In case of an EU Scheme the reference framework is generally the European standards. The strength of this type of certification lies in the third party, the recognised reference systems and, in the case of marks of conformity, a follow-up of the quality of products and production sites.

2.2 Some remarks concerning the certification & the European market

On the certification:

- For many years, all the key players think that certification strongly contributes to the market dynamism and places safer products on the market
- Around 60 000 certificates for electrical products are issued per year in Europe. The percentage of failing products in first testing for safety reasons is around 50 %. The estimate for unsafe products that would have come on the market without third party certification is 2 400 000.
- Voluntary certification (Third Party) in Europe is no more a competitive weapon between manufacturers
- Certification could contribute to obtain more efficient market surveillance.
- Mandatory certification (e.g. Argentina, China) and import controls (e.g. Turkey) in the world are increasing significantly.
- Certificates, Marks of conformity are copied with complete impunity
- Certification is not always used by all the players to promote safety & quality of products
- As an example in the consumers mind the CE Marking, has replaced somehow the voluntary certifications,
- Consistency, harmonisation, credibility, liability and durability are not always applied to certification

On the European Market:

- Counterfeited and non-complying products are increasing. (from 1 to 3%, over the last few years)
- Many products placed on the EU market and bearing the CE marking are dangerous.
- General weakness of the market surveillance today in Europe for industrial, electrical products and electronics. – The means used by the civil services are not appropriate considering rapidly increasing marketing delays concerning these products.
- Forces of control are mostly oriented on the consumer business (foods, luxury products and consumer goods) leaving industrial and commercial products quite risky for the user (private or professional).
- Disparity in actions relative to market surveillance and tests in the different countries in European Union are confirmed
- Sanctions in case of confirmation of non compliance or dangerous products are rare and not very efficient

3 Seven (7) LOVAG Mark orientations for the European Business

The ambition is to obtain an overall certification that ensures that **products comply permanently with local regulations and with standardisation**

The challenge is to get a **world wide LOVAG Mark recognition**, reinforcing so the **customer confidence** of the products through durable high levels of safety and to get more easily **mandatory certification** for countries outside of Europe.

The seven LOVAG Mark orientations are:

1) Consider LOVAG Mark as a marketing tool

- To attest product conformity to the complete standard
- To contribute to reinforce the customer safety and confidence
- To gain the access to markets by easily obtaining the local mandatory or contractual mark of conformity

2) Make LOVAG Mark an associated element of the products of industrial low voltage equipment

- To ensure quality and safety of the products to make the LOVAG Mark a quality mark, required by the market
- To maintain and to increase market share of the product
- To bring defense tools to manufacturers in the event of legal proceedings

3) Ensure the credibility of the LOVAG Mark

- To fight against copies, false or counterfeit of certification
- To ensure coherence & quality level of the test laboratory
- To maintain the high profile and the durability (organization and certification)
- To give sanction to a certification body in case of disregard of the rules.

4) Promote the voluntary LOVAG Mark

- To promote the advantages & assets of the LOVAG Mark.
- To give the right market position of the LOVAG Mark in front of the CE marking to eliminate conflict or lack of understanding
- To invite and to push all the participants (manufacturers, installers, distributors...) to do the same and use LOVAG Mark.
- To organize the follow-up of the LOVAG Mark to ensure the manufacturers continued compliance with the agreement
- To contribute to reinforce the requirement for quality to access the European market

5) Promote complete harmonized EN and IEC standards as a requirement for the LOVAG Mark

- The CENELEC harmonized standards respect the essential requirements of the European directives (New Approach).
- EN and IEC standards must be used as the basis to obtain the LOVAG Mark
- For certain markets national deviations must be regarded

6) Use LOVAG Mark to contribute to reinforce Market Surveillance

- The conformity assessment by a third party reinforces the technical product file linked to the CE Marking
- It brings tangible & incontestable proofs that the European directives essential exigencies are respected.
- Authorities have interest to take into consideration certification to obtain more efficient their market control

7) Use LOVAG Mark to create fair conditions for market access to EU and worldwide

- Identical requirements for certificates and mark of conformity must be applied to all manufacturers within and outside Europe.
- Mutual agreements with certification bodies and authorities for reciprocity worldwide, where certification or marks are mandatory.
